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## AFAF helps AFRL's Hose family pay for respite care

by 1st Lt. Dani Burrows, ASC Public Affairs

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio — Staff Sgt. Mike Hose first learned about the Air Force Assistance Fund (AFAF) when he was a young airman stranded at the military passenger terminal in Elmendorf, Alaska, while on leave from Kunsan AB, South Korea.

So, it was not surprising to him when he discovered that Air Force Aid, a division of AFAF, could help him pay for respite care for his two-year-old daughter Caitlyn, who was born without a femur in her right leg.

"We knew we were eligible for some compensation under the (Exceptional Family Member Program), but it wasn't until we moved here that we found out about the other programs that were available to us," said Hose, an emergency medical technician at the Air Force Research Laboratory acceleration and bio-dynamics branch here.

Hose discovered AFA could pay for respite care, which is either extended care beyond normal day care or physical therapy. He uses the program every two weeks to once a month, he said.

Respite care allows Hose and his wife to go away for the weekend, for example, he said. "It gives us a break from taking care of Caitlyn on a day-to-day basis."

Hose's wife found out about the respite care program when she was filling out a resume at the family support center shortly after the family moved here.

"Each base that we PCS to, we seem to find out more and more things that are available, like the respite care program," he said.

Hose describes the FSC and AFAF office as an "inviting atmosphere."

"You go there, talk to them about your problems, and they'll see what they can do for you," he said. "The first time I got Air Force Aid (for the airplane ticket back to Kunsan AB) I don't know if I was shy or if I just thought 'I can do this myself.'"

Hose said he thinks that pride gets in the way of many Air Force people asking for help.

But, he said, "It's not like going in for a loan, on the outside, where they scrutinize everything. I mean, they want to know why you want it and they want to know it's going to be used for that specific purpose, but they understand that you're there for a reason. You're not just there to get money, just to have the money. You're there to get something repaired or something in your home taken care of."

Hose applied for AFA again when he experienced several problems with his house while he was away on temporary duty. While

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Leah Hose watches her husband Staff Sgt. Michael Hose play with their daughter Caitlyn at their home in Pine Estates. The Hoses receive help caring for Caitlyn through Air Force Aid, a division the Air Force Assistance Fund. Caitlyn was born without a femur in her right leg. AFA pays for respite care which gives the parents a break and allows them to get away for a weekend. Leah learned about the respite care program soon after the family moved here when she visited the base family support center. Air Force photo by Spencer P. Lane

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he was away, his wife was able to apply for several loans through AFAF.

“They never gave my wife a hassle. They just said, how much do you need? And then she’d go and get an estimate. And they gave her the money upfront. And they wouldn’t do anything about the money until I returned from TDY,” he said.

As for the help with his young daughter, Hose said, “They’ve helped us to find that special care and by placing us on the EFMP program so we can get that care close to where we’re stationed.”

And he said they’ll continue to use the financial help as long as it’s available to them. “It’s a great program,” said Hose, “They’ve definitely taken care of me and my family.” @